

TWO NEOTROPICAL ANTS ESTABLISHED IN THE
UNITED STATES.

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In a recent number of the Journal of Economic Entomology¹ Mr. M. R. Smith called attention to two Neotropical ants, *Iridomyrmex iniquus* Mayr and *Wasmannia auropunctata* Roger, as occurring in the United States. The former was found inhabiting the greenhouse of the University of Illinois, the latter was taken out of doors at Miami, Florida.

The *Iridomyrmex* has been a denizen of the greenhouses of the Bussey Institution for at least the past twenty years, as I noticed its occurrence soon after I moved to Boston in 1908. The specimens do not, however, belong to the typical form of the species but to the var. *nigellus* Emery, originally described from Costa Rica. They were probably introduced in soil with tropical plants some years prior to 1908. Although the green-houses have been fumigated on several occasions with calcium cyanide for the purpose of ridding them of plant pests, the ant has always managed to survive and is now as abundant as ever. Our gardener regards it as a nuisance. He has found it visiting the flowers of strawberries used in hybridizing experiments and suspects it of cutting out the anthers. Its principal food, however, is the honey-dew of Coccids, as Mr. Smith has observed. The small nests are made in the thin layer of soil on the benches under the pots and contain glistening white larvæ at all seasons of the year. I have taken the males and winged females in March.

Wasmannia auropunctata, a very common ant throughout Central and northern South America, the West Indies and the warmer portions of Mexico, is cited by Mr. Smith from Miami, Florida. That it is established in tropical Florida is indicated also by the fact that some five years

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ago Dr. David Fairchild sent me a number of specimens that had been taken by his daughter, Miss Nancy Fairchild, at Cocoanut Grove, Florida, with the comment that their stings were painful. This ant is often abundant in the coffee plantations of Porto Rico where it is known as the "hormiguilla" and proves to be very annoying to the berry-pickers. It is not infrequently transported to northern ports with orchids and other tropical plants. I possess a series of workers and winged females taken by Mr. F. B. Shaw in orchids from Colombia at quarantine in New York City, and Donisthorpe¹ has the following remarks on its occurrence in England: "I first discovered this very small species in Kew Gardens in 1907; it is one of the commonest ants at Kew, being abundant in the propagating pits and some other houses. It nests in and under flower-pots, in the leaf-sheaves of *Piper obliquum* v. *eximium*, etc. and its males and females, which are very large in comparison with the workers, occur in December and January in the nests, and sometimes on the walls of the hot-houses. A small "woodlouse" somewhat like *Platyarthrus hoffmanseggi*, and the little spider *Diblemma donisthorpei* Camb., which is superficially very like the worker ants, are usually found in the nests. In 1922 Halkyard took it in a banana store in Manchester."

While it is probable that both the *Iridomyrmex* and the *Wasmannia* may eventually become established in green-houses in many parts of the United States, they will be able to survive out of doors only in the very restricted tropical portions of the country.

¹British Ants, 2nd ed. 1927 p. 393.